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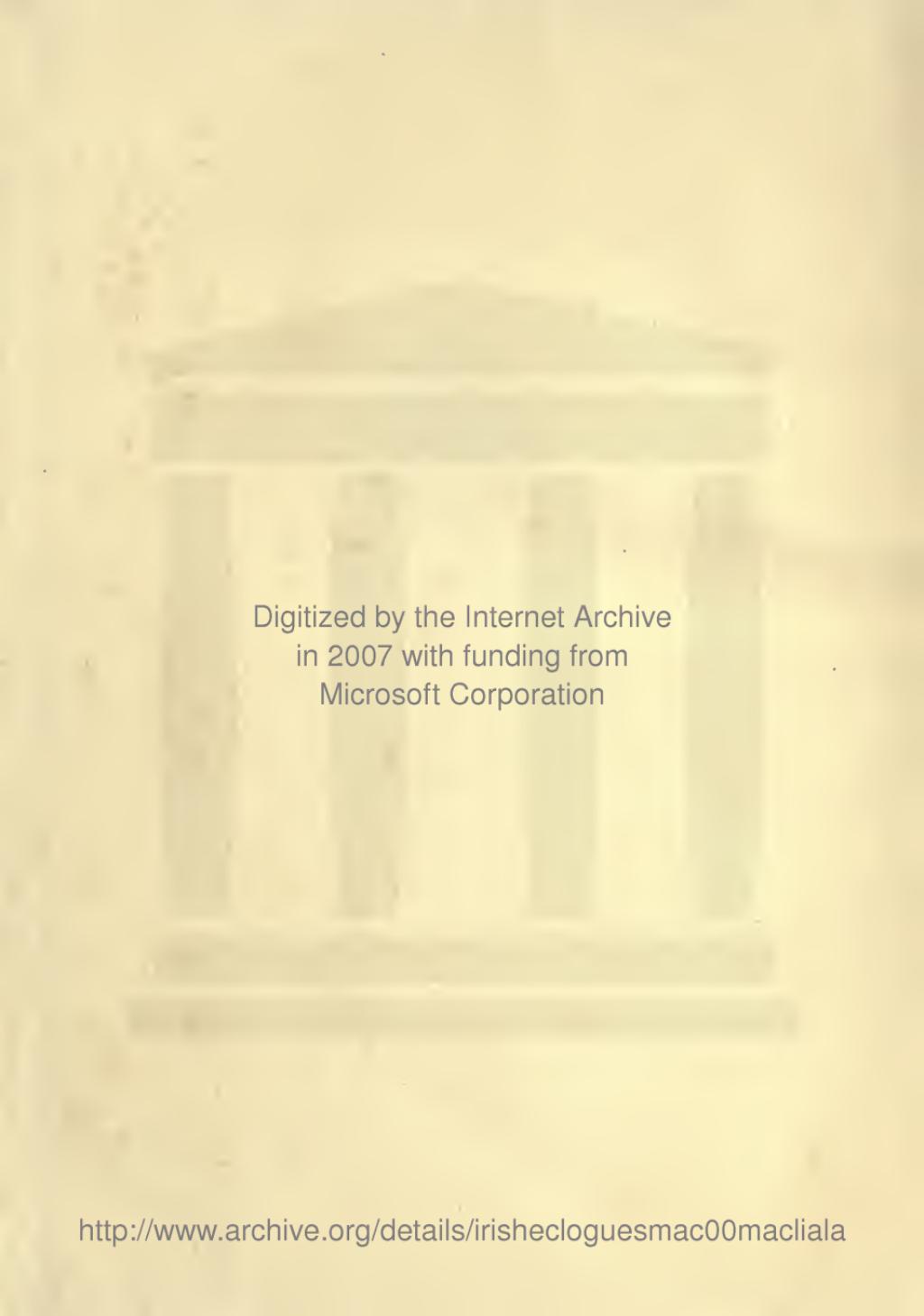
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IRISH ECLOGUES

EDWARD E. LYSAGHT



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A very faint, light blue watermark-style illustration of a classical building with four columns and a triangular pediment occupies the background of the page.

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IRISH ECLOGUES

IRISH ECLOGUES
BY EDWARD E. LYSAGHT

MAUNSEL & COMPANY, LTD.
DUBLIN AND LONDON

1915

DEDICATION

*BEAUTY I meet with everywhere :
A rounded bosom partly bare,
A maiden's errant lock of hair
Tossed in the balmy southern air,
Eyes of violet deep as rare,
Eyes that challenge the bold to dare,
Beauty that needs no craftsman's care ;
But none I see that is half so fair
As the girl at home who is pledged to share
My life with me.*

*Her beauty is not for all to see
Like a rainbow's obvious brilliancy,
It is traced with a delicate subtlety
For I do not find a treasury
Of perfect features, perfectly*

DEDICATION

*Planned with a sculptor's symmetry,
But a face that is full of energy,
Yet soft like an old time melody
In the haunting Celtic minor key
And an eye suffused with a sympathy
That blends the whole into harmony,
As, our arms entwined, she looks at me
In the firelight glow.*

Marseilles, 1913.

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I HEARD A LONE CALF CALLING

I HEARD a lone calf calling
Plaintively, drearily, for the mother it
had lost.

I stood and watched the hungry cows around
me

Picking the scanty grass of early March.
I leant awhile upon the four-pronged fork
The day's work chanced to make my tool,
And as I stood and gave my thoughts their
liberty

They came upon a way yet unexplored.
Ah ! many a day I'd worked and stood
Where I now idled a brief spell,
But never seen the beauty of the life I led,
Or felt how much the life of every day could
show

To one who cared to read.

I HEARD A LONE CALF CALLING

'Twas like the sudden glorious discovery
A man makes when he finds he loves a
woman ;

Her features which he saw and knew before
Change wondrously, as by some weird
enchantment of the gods.,

And as I went on working till the twilight
came

My brain, awakened in its gladness, wildly
sped its way

In mad and formless song.

A RECOLLECTION OF A COLD WET NIGHT IN 1909

MY smoky lantern throws its flickering
ray

Now on the cobbles, now upon the
walls ;

I hear the log chains rattling in the stalls,
I hear the chestnut whinnying to the grey ;
Below the gate the fragrant scent of hay,
Saved on a pleasant summer's day,
Despite the cold raw wind and sleet recalls
My shivering mind to thoughts of summer
zephyrs.

There in the lower yard the thirty heifers,
The calves we knew last year,
Sleek-coated, placid, mild-faced animals,
Warm bedded, care not whether snow flake
falls

A COLD WET NIGHT IN 1909

Or midnight skies are clear,
But in one long unceasing chorus,
A duotone sonorous,
They munch and champ, and chew the
fragrant fodder.
Their calm contentment throws on me a spell,
Their peaceful mood floods me—and all
seems well.

A minute since the cold incessant rain
Beating in gusts against my lonely shutter,
The big bleak empty barrack's ghostly
sounds,
The icy draughts that made my candle gutter,
The four bare walls that were the gloomy
bounds
Of my inhabited domain,
The narrow bed with blankets still untended,
The nail where hung the rags that no one
mended,

A COLD WET NIGHT IN 1909

Had filled my heart with something near to
pain.

I thought with longing of the idle days
I spent at college, of the cheery room
Where to sit single brought no lonely gloom
Upon the brain,
Remembered enviously the jovial friends
Who came to share a glass, a rowdy song,
And went their ways
Without a care, a harum-scarum throng—

But now the sounds and smells around me
From my obsession have unbound me,
No more a prey to dull misgiving
I feel again the joy of living,
Though by the storm my sense is staggered,
Though I have felt forlorn and friendless
Drifting upon an ocean endless,
A single old familiar greeting
Can send my morbid fancies fleeting.

A COLD WET NIGHT IN 1909

A single perfume from the haggard,
The subtle scent of sheltered cattle,
A startled rooster's tittle-tattle,
The champ of horses in the stable,
The windcock creaking on the gable,
Even a new calved heifer's moan,
Her plaintive yearning monotone,
Makes me feel less alone.

Oh, ye Poets who have sung
Praises of our country life,
When ye hymned your tuneful words
What knew ye of midnight work ;
Of the cares that daily lurk
Round a farmer's flocks and herds ;
Had ye ever used the knife
While a life in balance hung ;
Had ye ever left your beds
To tend a suffering horse's colic :

A COLD WET NIGHT IN 1909

Had ye sat all night and shivered
Till a heifer was delivered
Of a stubborn first born calf?
Farmers cannot always laugh,
Life is not all fun and frolic,
Poetry her fancy sheds
On reality bucolic.

Yet for all your ignorance
Ye have sung the truth by chance.
Though the seasons may not favour,
Though the cows are short of milk,
Though disease attack my fold
And my bullocks are unsold,
Though my farm's remote and far
From the towns where pleasures are,
Though I go not clothed in silk
Yet my fealty will not waver;
I still find the world's romance
Here in my inheritance.

CAITILIN'S FIELD

I SING the song of the man who has
sweated and toiled
All day at the saving of hay and the
making of tramps *
On a day when his work is well spent, and
the crop is not spoiled
By the rain that he damns.

When the dew has gone off of the ground
and the heat of the sun
Is very near able to melt the prong of his
fork,
When already the small little breeze the task
has begun,
Then man sets to work.

* Local word for wynds or tramp-cocks, pronounced tram.

CAITILIN'S FIELD

Five acres of good meadow hay is in Caitilin's
field,
In windrows we have it made up, 'twill not
rain, we've no fear,
'Tis only the fools who make cocks when
the clouds are concealed
And the sky is all clear.

Ten men there are with me as well as
myself, and a boy
To ride on the horse that draws in the hay
from the rows ;
We'll easily tramp it by night, and we'll
count it a joy
To do it, God knows.

Three tramps are kept going at once, for the
meadow is flat
And the skeeter works smoothly, and quickly
its loads are upturned,

CAITILIN'S FIELD

Till the sweat runs off us in streams, and
the man that is fat
His wage will have earned.

There's skill in the work, for it isn't mere
ignorant labouring
To build up a tramp while two men are
forking their best,
And not have it turn when its made, to be
for the neighbouring
Farmers a jest.

There's skill in the skeeting, there's skill in
the pulling, there's skill
In the way that the hay is forked off of
the ground, for you'll see
When a man comes out of a town, though
he work with a will,
What a fool he does be.

CAITILIN'S FIELD

Tired we may be when at night we have
forked the last sop,
The last sugaran is tied, and we put on our
coats to go home,
But we wouldn't change place with the
King in his Parliament shop,
Or the Pope that's in Rome.

For what do the dwellers in palaces know
of the feel
Of the arm that is wearied with work, yet
ready for more,
Or the appetite simple and keen a man
brings to the meal
His house has in store ?

THE MARCH FAIR

THREE o'clock, and with a start
I waken, cursing fair and mart.
And the bullocks, if they knew,
Surely would be cursing too ;
Seven English miles have they,
Long before the dawn of day,
Seven English miles to tramp.

(Where the devil is the lamp ?)

Bullocks ! In your innocence
Yours a day of abstinence.
It will take two hours and more
For us to go to Killimor.
Then when we're there we'll stand forlorn
Like long wooled sheep that have been
shorn,
Too early in the summer.

THE MARCH FAIR

'Tis eight o'clock and ne'er a bid :
What fools to come—yet well we did,
For out from yonder caravan,
Where Mrs. Browne wields her tin-can
And serves cold herrings, tea and bread
To Michael, Paddy, Tom and Ned,
There comes a man who's slep' it out :
He's a shipper, there's no doubt.
I know him, sure, 'tis Johnny Curtin,
He'll buy our cattle now for certain.
I ask a hundred for the ten,
He scans them slightly and then
He turns away without a word.
I wink my eye to Mick, the herd.
"Come here, I want you, Sir," cries he,
"What is the bullocks' price to be ?"
—"They're not worth nine." But Jim
Molony
(We all know Jim, the poor old crony)

THE MARCH FAIR

Puts in his word without a smile :
“ I don’t care which, but wait awhile
Ask nine fifteen and cut a crown.”
—“ Is that the way you’d beat me down ? ”
John strikes my hand and goes away.
And then comes back again to say
He’ll not break Jim Molony’s word.
(We all say that, we’re so absurd)
And so at last the bargain’s struck ;
It’s left to me about the luck.
“ Begob ! ” says Mick, “ for all his tricks
They’re dear enough at nine twelve six.”
So later on when we’ve been paid,
We’ll drink their health in lemonade.
(The devil sweep those pledges)

Herded with others, scores and scores,
Our bullocks, mixed with cows and
stores,

THE MARCH FAIR

Are driven through the thronging fair
Out to the railway station, where
Numbers of trucks, all just the same,
Swallow the beasts we knew by name,
Which lose in leaving Mick and me
Their individuality.

God ! On what venture ye embark,
To feed at length some city clerk
Whose widest world is Blackpool.

THE JOY OF PERMANENCE

OLD John with his plough may turn
a scrape
As true as the flight of an arrow,
But well he knows that it can't escape
The levelling stroke of the harrow.

Danny has built a faultless rick,
I never saw one to beat it ;
But his work is not made with stone or
brick—
Later on the cattle will eat it.

I have shaken oats from year to year,
But at heart I have laboured sadly,
For it all looks the same when the fields are
clear,
Though I scatter it never so badly.

THE JOY OF PERMANENCE

But here is a work that I feel is worth
The full of our human endeavour,
For we're leaving our mark on the face of
the earth,
A mark that will stay for ever.

We are battling with ancient barren land,
Boulders and straggling heather ;
We have worked till the tan on our arms is
tanned
Double deep by the cut of the weather.

Rocks and stones we have raised and moved
Till a great wide wall has risen
Round the bounds of a field that no man
loved
And the goats used to count a prison.

And now it is levelled and limed and
ploughed :
The brown earth calls for the sower.
In six months this will be one of a crowd
When it falls to the scythe of the mower.

THE RIVER MEADOW

GRACEFULLY, steadily, easily
Three men are mowing
Bending and rising they capture the
Rhythm of rowing.

Swish goes the cut of the scythes as they
Glide all together
Through the cool stems of the river hay
In the hot weather.

Then at the end of the swath comes the
Sound of the honing
Grating but ringing melodiously
Like a bee droning.

THE RIVER MEADOW

Morning and noon time and evening
Comes a young maiden
Porter and buttermilk carrying
Willingly laden.

And while they drink under shadowy
Willows eternal
The meadow distils for them heavenly
Scent of sweet-ernal.*

* It may not be generally known that sweet-ernal
is the name of the grass which gives the characteristic
scent to freshly cut hay.

PALES AND CERES

PALES

I AM the goddess of the Golden Vale,
I rule the downs and the fat plains of
Meath,

And to my devotees I can bequeath
The rich sleek ox, the overflowing pail,
The cool of summer dairies in the dale,
Where lies the homestead, girdled with a
wreath

Of prying creepers groping underneath
The thatch, the dingy beams within to scale.

And in the luscious pastures stand my kine,
Some suckle calves, some plod home to the
byre,

Bullocks knee deep in pasture graze their fill,
Or seek the shallows in a careless line,
Or under shady branches lie quite still
Chewing the cud with jaws that never tire.

PALES AND CERES

CERES

HEED not O Eire, the specious promises
Of idle Pales, hearken unto me,
I am the queen of life and energy ;
I check the hopeful exile's eagerness ;
I keep the life blood in my villages,
For when I govern a community
There will the pleasant sound of labour be—
I feel no pride in ranches tenantless.

My beauty lies in sight of human toil,
In the green corn when pastures still are white,
Or in a yellowing cornfield in the breeze,
In the sweet smell when freshly turns the soil,
In rows of pointed stooks at glimmering night,
Or thresher's hum like buzz of million bees.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

I—DANNY COGHLAN

DANIEL Coghlans, down from the mountains,
Tough hardy Dan, from beyant in the mountains,
You're the best worksman I know.
Thin is your arm, sure,
Yerra, what harm, sure,
'Tis you have the go !

You have the knowledge, you have the strength, too :
Knowledge is great, but men must have strength too,
Each by itself is no good ;
Then you are quick, Dan,
Some men are thick, Dan,
Thicker than wood.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

Keenly you work ; 'tis hard to get keen men.
I love to be watching or working with keen
men,

Men who learnt labour at home.

You have ten acres, man,

Keep it, be Jakers, man,

Let emigrants roam.

You are the right man, one I can trust in,
I could never leave home if I'd no one to
trust in

And know that my work will be done.

The devil a loss, boys,

While he is your boss, boys,

The devil a one.

You're independent, never obsequious,
A man of free birth is never obsequious,

He leaves it to schemer and slave.

If this poem should live, lad,

'Tis all I've to give, lad,

For all that you gave.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

II— — — — —

I LOOK upon you as a curiosity,
— — — you master of excuse
and wile.

You clothe your tortuous scheming with
verbosity,
But I confess you only make me smile.

You are a part of that still puzzling mystery
That English rule bequeathed us from the
past,

Your type is simply the result of history,—
And into history it's sinking fast.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

III—JAMESY

WHEN there's a dirty job to do,
Or one man has the work of
two,

Nobody ever questions who—
Be there many or be there few :
'Tis Jamesy Shaughnessy !

When we are loading posts of oak
Upon a high-wheeled one-horse yoke
Who has the heavy ends bespoke
And lifts till his arms are almost broke
But Jamesy Shaughnessy !

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

Yet there's one man who's always willing
No matter if he's in the killing
Of pigs, or maybe he'll be filling
Dung carts all day, or ridges tilling,
Though he may not know a crown from a
shilling,

That's Jamesy Shaughnessy !

'Tis equal what or where the place,
He always wants to force the pace,
At digging spuds he's mad to race,
Or hoeing : "Sure, 'tis all a case,"

Says Jamesy Shaughnessy.

But then at digging spuds or hoeing,
And even binding sheaves or mowing,
When you're too fond of rapid going
The bad results will soon be showing,

O, Jamesy Shaughnessy !

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

His beard is just a tangled mat,
He always wears an old hard hat,
And he never stops to smoke or chat—
What can I do with a man like that,
 Eh, Jamesy Shaughnessy ?

If I give him a job that's tasty or neat
Sure, his own gossoon will have him beat,
All he has is muscle and bone.
I must send him off and leave him alone
For he'll work his best without deceit,
Nor go away till the job's complete,
 What do you say, Jamesy ?
For I have to get the best that I can
Out of every labouring man,
I don't care whether he's Jim or Dan
 Or Jamesy Shaughnessy.

It is only fair to Jamesy to say that these verses were written some years ago, before I knew him as well as I do now. The hard hat is discarded, the beard neatly trimmed, and Jamesy, who has found his true vocation as yardman, is now one of my most trusted and reliable men.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

IV—THADY ANGLIM (R. I. P.)

THADY, for all your shaggy face
And halting crab-like gait,
I must accord to you a place
Among the verses in this book :
You'll never learn your fate.
For all your thoughts, your very look,
Told of a purpose undeterred,
You had but one delight,
You only wept when loss occurred
Among the members of our herd,
Now, we are weeping you, interred
For ever from our sight.

SOME OF MY WORKMEN

V—WILLIAM MORRISSEY
(1843-1913)

NO mighty warrior lies in that cold grave,
No king who bears a high illustrious name,
Nor politician with a transient fame,
Nor even a singer famous for his stave.
You were a simple honest man. No knave
Can breathe a scandal, find a tint of shame,
Nor for a meanness lay on you the blame,
A simple servant always: never a slave.

What can I say of you in greater praise?
A simple honest man—were you here now
You would not wish a higher compliment.
So when at seventy years you've done your days,
And to a hostile world have made your bow,
I say what I have said before you went.

THE GREY HORSE

I LOVE the summer months because I eat
The fresh green grass, because my tired
feet

Find soft moist standing in the time of heat.

I love the winter, when my rattling chain
Binds me in reach of hay and good plump
grain

And a strong roof keeps out the wind and
rain.

THE ASS

LONG, long ago I was a foal,
A happy, shaggy little foal,
I used to gallop, graze and roll,
And when I thought, I thought the whole
World was a meadow.

But now I work and pull a car,
A heavy overloaded car ;
I smell the meadows from afar :
But only once a week they are
More than a shadow.

THE SHEEP DOG

LEAPING and barking, madly careering,
Nimbly avoiding their kicks, I am
steering

The dairy cows home to the byre ;
The sluggish cows home.

Working the sheep is my joy of existence,
Rounding them into the fold from a distance,
Snapping the last as he runs
Through the gate of the pen.

Trotting sedately when worktime is finished
I follow my master, my keenness diminished,
Till I stretch myself out by the fire
At the feet of the men.

TO MY DOG

OH what do we care for the boasts of
the shooters
Who prate of their bags and their
battues and drives,
Who ride to their moors and their coverts in
motors
And chat while they wait to other men's
wives ;
Who leave all the work and the fun to the
beaters,
All thinking and craft to their headkeeper's
brains,
Who dream not of duck but of Darracq two
seaters,
Whose joy in the bag is how much it
contains.

TO MY DOG

Eat this bone for you've work before you
to-day ;

Now a bite for me and then we'll
away.

LOUGH DERG

I

AS I push out my boat
And carelessly float
Down the sluggish stream
To the beds of reeds
And the deep stemmed weeds
Where the minnows dream,

Soon a startled Coot
With trailing foot
Leaves a bubbling wake,
As he splashes away
To the bosom grey
Of the open lake ;

LOUGH DERG

And the dabchick strives
With his slippery dives
To escape unseen ;
And the divers swim,
At the water's rim,
To their rushy screen.

The kittiwakes' white
Gives a touch of light
To the lough's dull breast,
As they rise and dip,
Like a faery ship,
At the waves' behest.

LOUGH DERG

II

A CLUMP of high green reeds now
yellowing in decay,
An island landless and without a
shore,

I know of such a hiding place in every little
bay

Where I can check my boat's drift, where
she and I can stay,
And I can learn the lake bird's lore.

First the gulls, the laughing gulls, come
circling round my head,
Laughing they pitch on yonder rock,
And sometimes with them a tern uncomraded,

LOUGH DERG

That child of the breezes in some airy
kingdom bred,
Circles still, while below the gulls mock.

Small and unnoticed the dotterel and his
mate
Come swinging and darting on their skimming
course,
They alight, but to return, or if by chance
they wait
Rest never finds them, but an evergloating
fate
Drives them on with an unseen force.

With a rushing sound of wings,
Like a sudden breeze
When it strikes the tops
Of an ancient wood,
A flock of wild duck comes,

LOUGH DERG

With unchecked speed
They swish through the air
In a flashing curve
Dropping upon the water's face
As lightly as a mayfly ;
There they float and idly swim,
Idly paddle in the shallows.
Some stand up and stretch a wing,
Tired with speed of journeying,
One turns back his head to sleep,
One—but I have made some sound—
They are off and far away
Lost among the misty grey
I can see them flashing dim
Making for securer shallows.

LOUGH DERG

III

THEN the swerving plover, that
gossiping bird
Who every moment swoops out of
his course,
As if some far away music he heard,
And he wanted to trace the elusive charm
Of the phantom melody down to its source
At the brim of the water, nor comes to harm
As he falls headlong from a dizzy height,
And fluttering down his comrades follow
In a mass confused till they reunite
With a tern-like grace and the ease of a
swallow
Into a disciplined serried array,
One aimless purpose common to all ;

LOUGH DERG

All instantly answering one common whim,
They wing their devious voyage away,
Hastening still to that unknown call,
That will-o'-the-wisp at the water's brim
Which they found not there, but seek it now
Among the boulders or after the plough,
And their wings flash white as they wheel in
the sun,
Or gambol and tumble in aery fun.

LOUGH DERG

IV

ON MY WAY HOMEWARD AT THE END OF THE DAY

A GENTLE breeze that has timely
veered
From the west to the east, and has
made of the sky
An indigo vault of transparent hue,
A deep-toned matchless infinite blue,
Is helping my boat, as I lazily ply
My oars on the course I have oft-times
steered ;
But I think tonight there is something
weird
In the change of the sky and the half-risen
moon,

LOUGH DERG

For the curlew's call seems eerier now
As, seeking his mates, he crosses my bow,
And the coots who croak in the rushy
lagoon,
Where they built their nests and their
nestlings reared,
Or utter that short sharp sound of their own
Like the click of a mason chiselling stone,
Make the world that I know seem aloof and
unknown.

I come to some rocks in the midst of the
lake
Where the pillibeen meeks have found their
rest
Counting their bivouac safe from harm,
Till the sentinel sounds the note of alarm,
And their chattering stops and the ceaseless
quest
Once more their winnowing wings undertake.
Should they sleep the redshank is ever awake;

LOUGH DERG

As the watchdog barks when a stranger
appears,
So his shrilling to tardier wild fowl pro-
claims
The advent of man who murders and maims
(Whom every creature instinctively fears,
And only the dog will never forsake)—
Though his throat is slender and long his
bill
Those three wild notes quiver piercing shrill,
To tell of the enemy out to kill.

The stillness of night settles down once more,
Stiller now since the silence was rent by the
whir
That the wings of the pillibeens made as
they rose,
Or the rumbling creak of a cart as it goes
On its homeward way, or a cottager

LOUGH DERG

Sings a snatch of song on a distant shore,
And the sound comes clearly travelling o'er
The stretch of the tiny rippling waves
And makes when it ceases the stillness more
still.

But the quiet has ever a murmuring trill,
The faintest of echoes from watery graves,
Where naiads forgotten still whisper their
lore,
Where the trout and the red-finned perch
evade
The grisly king-pike's ambuscade
As they glide through the weeds of a limpid
glade
Fathoms down.

DO YOU NEVER WANT TO BE ALONE

DO you never want to be alone
Away from the octopus—man,
To be at one with the pine trees' moan,
Where they moan in monotonous monotone
As they moaned when the world began;
To don the wings of the buzzing drone ;
To wander free with the old god Pan ;
To ponder awhile on the wondrous plan
That governs both saint and courtesan,
Their destiny and our own ?

A DROWSY WINTER'S DAY

SOMETIMES when on a drowsy
winter's day

My hands refuse to work and I am
filled

With a mad wish to give my senses play,
Or pen the words my fancy has distilled,
Then, as by chance, my steps will seek a
path,

Shunning to meet a single shepherd's dog,
To some uncharted peaceful solitude.

For in this ancient country many a rath
And rolling mountain and forsaken bog
Offer to share with me my lonely mood.

Oh God ! who made them, what a mastery
Of all the arts has your omnipotence,
To have created such a symphony
Of sound and colour ; my benumbéd sense

A DROWSY WINTER'S DAY

Dulls ere I find some words to tell of it.
Gone are the mists but now that cast a gloom
Over the land and the belated sun
Shines palely, like a lamp in evening lit
While still some daylight strays into a room
Before the curtain's drawn and tea's begun.

Palely he shines, yet touching by his glow
The madder birch-tops with a tint of rose
And purple shadows, as with motion slow
The branches sway where'er the light wind
blows,
Marking the hollies in their sombre green
(Clothed midst the naked boughs of
mighthier trees)
Where they still keep the soft rain's glisten-
ing dew ;
Or in the furze that bounds the old bohreen
Some bolder blossom than the rest he sees,
And lights this tiny speck of golden hue.

FURZE

YELLOWER—far—than Meredith's
yellow picture,
Golden as no other thing is golden in
the earth,
Ireland is golden in spring and early summer:
Gold is winter's deathbed, gold is summer's
birth.

Big beds of furze, sheets of golden blossom,
Stretch gently sloping on every mountain
rise,
Hedgerows and ditches are all a mass of
furze bloom,
Shining, though no sunlight gilds our opal
skies.

AISGHLÍN.

Tá túil mór agam i mo teanga Óstáras. Neir-eann rí gheirm ari iomáda fear i de mo chineadh, agur beirfeann rí gheirm oifimh a noir. Táim im' macléiginn, agur i'f féidir liom i ghríobhadh, go mall, ceana férin. Féad aip rín: fear deic mbliaidhna fíchead t'aois agur oide ag teagart a teanga mátartha Ó. O'n lá do-pugadh mé bior ag eirteacht leir an mBéarla ari gac taoibh. So deimhín i'f alúinn an teanga an Béarla, agur tá clú ari a litriúdeacht ari fuid an domáin, ac ní h-é teanga mo fínnreap é; ní fiú mo teanga férin é agur fár nádúrtha na haimreipe uipre; i'f éagcormaill ari fad atá anam an tala teanga. Ní fúláil dom roghaum go duanmhar agur mé im' fear. Súgann leanb teanga a Óstáras i'f teac cónaí nádúrtha le bainne cíc a mátar; i'f goirt mícheabha a aigne; cuirtear rianta aip go fúrta.

Fionnann gac Éireannach férin gup b'i an Gaeilge a teanga Óstáras. Cuireann an fírinne reo átar mór aip-rean, agur aircuileann teine a átar aip riomhnt t'earbhad a doirfe leinb. Fionnann duine an fírinne reo de phreib, duine eile i ndiaidh a céile; ac i'f iomáda fear, agur bean, leir, a aimsirg i, agur Seibeann duine éigin a oifreacáit gac uile lá férin. Tá an Gaeilge ag rleamhnuigadh ari an nGaeithealtaist: éaluitgeann an cailleamhaint oifte ari éaluitgeann

AGUSÍN

cailleamaint na hóige agur na bheáistícta ari mhaoi —níor luaité oíche 'ná ari Saeóil Albán ná ari na Óireatnacháib, bír inír na cíorútaib rín ní náipe leir na daoiniú uairle a tceangá féin do labairt. Ác inír an n-Íalltaict bionn an cainnt a bí fé órioscmeair d'a hiondraf ariú i n-aice teangad na n-Íabaltóirí. Bionn an Saeóilge d'áclor ariú i n-iomád ball ná rífiúde. Bionn rí ag na macaib-léigínn i gColáirte na Tríonóide, mar ní námaid na hÉireann luct an coláirte rín go leir, fé mar i'r dónig le daoiniú eisín. Bionn an Saeóilge ag doirreabair, ag raor, ag ceart-dúiné, ag fiú na gconrtáblan ari uairiú. Baisíodh Saeðeala i gceiliúde agur labhrat Saeóilge le n-a céile. I mbaire áta Cuaic gnír oír cionn tríocád lion-tíse obairi mór agur iad ag tathairt ari na leanbháib Saeóilge do labairt ari dtúir agur bheapla d'fogluim 'n-a diaid rín. Tá báramail an pobail ag atmáil guri teangá cónir d'Éireannach agur d'a ríuoct an Saeóilge, cé go mbeidir féin ro-dorcha no rí-leirgeamail cun i fogluim. Cím é i mbuirídean na catraíc agur iadóran ag cur ainn Saeðealaíc ari na gráideacáib; daicítear eput Saeðealaíc na n-ainm ari fhiinneodsaib na riopair agur ari cairtíb; bairid páipréartha nuairdeacáta leathanais Saeóilge, agur ní fuláir do gcoláiríb na hOllgoile Náiríuntá i fogluim. Má bionn báramail an náiríunt mall bionn rí cumaraíc.

So deimín tá Óri Cualann cón Lán de Sáraíacar le haon áit i nÉirinn. Bior ann le déirdeannraighe; do buail d'fheam páirtí im' coinneib agur mire ag riubal ari

Agusín

an ḡrás. Ír i ngraeðilge aonáirt aonáinne " 'm
páirduán agat" agur ír ḡaeðilge a biondari ag labairt
agur iadair ag ḃéanamh rúgrád agur a' glaobhád ař
a céile. Ír thíos liom gur anro ača éipim an riota.
Má fógsuimeoscáid na páirctí agur iadair óg, beiró an
ḡaeðilge ag a bpáirctib fén ař nór cainntedír
dúċċasac. Ni ḃeað an fionbhar aca, ač ba ḡaorá-
idige a tioċfað an cainnt ēuca, agur labhróċairdír an
ḡaeðilge agur iadair ag páid na riotaí ača ionnta
fén. Ír férdir leir na páirctib fén ař Ṅteanga ḡo
ḡaorád. Tá rúil againn go mbeiró Eire i n-a tír Ṅá-
teanga. De ḃarr an Ṅeapla leanfamuiđ ař ař
Ṅgráċtair agur ař ař għacidpream leir an għuix eile
de'n roħan: comeċċafamuiđ an ḡaeðilge o' ař Ṅtein-
teānaib agur dūinn fén. Saopħair an Ṅeapla rinn
o ḃeit oileánaċ; ḡaopħair an ḡaeðilge rinn o ḃeit
iarrfarranac.

Tá na vánta inf an leabhar ro Eireannac, ač níl
riao ḡaeðealaċ: ni h-e mo ċoċċ ač mo ċippan go
b斧il ran amlakid.

FOOTNOTE *

LIKE so many others of my race I have become obsessed by my ignorance of what should be my native language. It has gripped me, and so I am a learner: am already able to write haltingly. But think what it means to be taught your mother tongue when for thirty years your companions have spoken around you none but a tongue which, however beautiful in itself, however glorious the literature it has produced, is not the language of your forefathers, is not even a modern modification of it, but one whose very essence and genius is completely strange to it; to learn laboriously as a man what should be absorbed as a child, when the mind is still an unbroken field and the whole being is receptive and impressionable as it can never be again.

Yet something of what is lost by this is regained in the enthusiasm which pervades each Irishman when he makes the discovery for himself that Gaelic is the native tongue of Ireland. To some the discovery comes suddenly, to some gradually, but many have made it and many are making it daily. As Gaelic dies out in the Gaeltacht, and dies there faster than it dies in the Highlands of Scotland

* *Translation of Aṣuirín.*

FOOTNOTE

or the other branch of the Celtic tongue dies in Wales, because our Irish upper classes are dead as such, in the Gaultacht it is reviving and again lifting its once despised head beside its foreign conqueror. In unexpected places you will meet the Gaelic now: students there are in Trinity College who have it (an institution erroneously but not altogether unnaturally believed by many Irishmen to be anti-Irish); you will meet a porter on a Dublin railway station, a barber's assistant, a shoemaker, even a policeman who has it; it is spoken at ceilidhs at night where Gaels foregather; the superhuman effort has even been made and accomplished by, I believe, over thirty families in Dublin of bringing up their children in their infancy in the Irish language only, without a word of English. Everywhere I see evidences that the Irish public (even if it has not the youth or energy in most cases to carry out its belief to its logical conclusions) is beginning to feel that Gaelic ought to be the national language. Why else do we have a corporation, not very many of whose members are bilingual, posting the names of the streets in Gaelic; shopkeepers painting the Gaelic form of their names on window and van; newspapers with their Gaelic columns; Gaelic a compulsory subject in the new National University? When public opinion is slow it is generally powerful.

I was in Bray recently, surely as anglicized a place as

FOOTNOTE

there is to be found in Ireland, and as I was walking along the esplanade a number of small children ran into me: “’m *papóún aghat*,” said one to me, and they ran off playing, and shouting to one another not in English but in Irish. Here it seems to me is the gist of the whole matter. If the children learn the language when they are young, their children in turn will acquire it naturally as native speakers acquire it, if not with the true native speaker’s *blar*, at least with the fluency that will make it their natural language of self-expression, and we shall have attained our ideal—which is to be a bilingual nation, keeping English as the language of commerce and intercourse with the outer world, and Irish as the language of our homes and our national life. English will save us from being insular, Irish from being provincial.

The foregoing verses are of Ireland, but they are not Gaelic: it was my fate, not I, decided that.

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